

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Caroline Roberts, Cabinet Member for Transport	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 29 Nov 2014	<small>EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:</small>
		E 2687
TITLE:	MetroWest Phase 1 Update Report	
WARD:	Abbey, Bathavon North, Bathavon West, Bathwick, Farmborough, Keynsham East, Keynsham North, Oldfield, Saltford, Twerton, Walcot, Westmoreland, Widcombe	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1. THE ISSUE

1.1. To approve the release of £188k of capital from the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) grant to provide continued support for the Phase 1 MetroWest project.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. To approve:

- (i) the £188k provisionally allocated in the 2014/15 capital programme for expenditure on the preparation of the Outline Business Case for MetroWest Phase 1.
- (ii) Delegating authority to the Divisional Director of Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to enter into a 'joint promotion agreement' with North Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils for the purpose of facilitating joint working to deliver the MetroWest Project, within approved funding limits

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

3.1. In April 2013, Cabinet gave initial approval for the Metro West project and allocated £124k for its initial development for the preliminary business case. In the February 2014 budget report £188k was provisionally approved by Council as Transport Improvement Programme; it is now requested that this be fully approved. The budget is fully funded by the Integrated Transport Block grant from Department for Transport.

- 3.2. The required sum for next year, 2015/16, is estimated to be £329k; this is proposed to be part of the Transport Improvement Programme and fully funded by the ITB grant. The formal approval for this will form part of the 2015/16 budget process. This will allow the continued development of the project so it can submit an application for a Development Consent Order.
- 3.3. The capital cost of the project is currently estimated at just over £58m which will be financed from DfT Major Transport Scheme funding, which was recently devolved to the WoE LEP in the Single Growth Fund. A full report will be provided next year, following the completion of the Outline Business Case, when firm resource commitments will need to be made prior to the delivery of the project. At that time it will be clearer what impact the project will have on the Council's capital and revenue budgets.
- 3.4. This Decision covers the cost of continued development of the project for the current financial year only and the need for a continued joint working agreement with North Somerset Council, as promoters of the project.
- 3.5. There is a revenue reversion risk in the case that a capital project does not go ahead.

4. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1. A full Environmental Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the Outline Business Case and will be available in due course.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1. **Background:** An improvement to local rail services has been a long standing aspiration of the WoE. The Metro West Project aims to improve the local rail network which is under-developed compared with most other major urban areas. The aim is to provide ½ hourly services across the sub-region. The first stage of this project, Metro West Phase 1, will re-open the Portishead railway and improve rail frequencies on the Severn Beach Line and into Bath and North East Somerset. The proposal has received significant support from DfT who consider the proposal to be well developed.
- 5.2. The project will link the Bristol Enterprise Zone with the Bath Riverside Enterprise Area. The improved rail frequency is seen as particularly significant in supporting the Master Plan currently being developed, as well as the being a central component of the Core Strategy, Economic Strategy, and both the Getting Around Bath and Keynsham Transport Strategies.
- 5.3. The completion of the Preliminary Business Case has demonstrated that, subject to land acquisition and statutory consents, it is technically a robust proposal and affordable within available budgets.
- 5.4. The first element of the MetroWest programme proposes to deliver a half hourly local service for:
- The Severn Beach line (hourly for St. Andrews Road and Severn Beach stations),
 - Bath to Bristol line (an additional hourly service overlaid with the existing hourly service and timed to provide an overall half hourly service), and

- A reopened Portishead line with stations at Portishead and Pill (also serving Parsons Street and / or Bedminster station subject to further technical work).

5.5. It therefore demonstrates there are no fundamental impediments to the delivery of the scheme by 2019.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The Preliminary Business Case illustrates that the project has an excellent Benefit to Cost Ratio over a number of options and therefore has every likelihood of receiving funding. In addition the Business Case has been subject to an independent review in accordance with the West of England Local Transport Body Board Assurance Framework.

7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The project has reviewed, with Network Rail, a number of detailed timetable options to optimise the use of rolling stock and provide a regular service across the conurbation. These are detailed in the Preliminary Business case.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The following stakeholder engagement has been undertaken during the Preliminary Business Case preparation:

- Liaison with Network Rail about GRIP1/2, Railsys modelling and other technical issues;
- Liaison with First Great Western about operational matters;
- Ongoing MetroWest Stakeholder meetings;
- Ongoing engagement with rail interest groups;
- Public consultation about Portishead Station location; and
- Liaison with some statutory environment bodies to inform the Environment Impact Assessment Scoping work.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. Key risks will form part of the quarterly reporting to the Joint Transport Board. Risks at the project and programme level are managed through the Rail Programme Board.

Contact person	Peter Dawson Tel 01225 395181
Background papers	MetroWest overview leaflet: http://www.travelwest.info/sites/default/files/documents/MetroWest%20P1%20April2014.pdf MetroWest Phase 1 Preliminary Business Case MetroWest Phase 1 Preliminary Business Case Review Both reports can be found at http://www.travelwest.info/mw/p1/pbc
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